

to bring up in morning business. I obviously would like to accommodate them. But I wonder if we could get some idea of who and how many, because obviously I am prepared to start the debate on the nuclear waste bill and want to accommodate Members.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I yield to Senator REID, if he would like to comment.

Mr. REID. I say, through the majority leader, to the Senator from Alaska, Senator DURBIN wishes to speak for 15 minutes and the Senator from Arkansas for 5 minutes. That is all we have until we turn to the matter of the Senator from Alaska.

I ask the Senator from Alaska, in relation to his opening statement, does he have any idea how long he is going to take?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I have no idea, Mr. President, how long the leadership wants to go today. But I am prepared to accommodate the interests of the Senate and am also prepared to go at great length. So it might be appropriate if we had some indication of how long the leadership wants this matter debated today because I understand we are going to be going off of it and then back on it.

Mr. LOTT. If I could respond, Mr. President, we do not have a certain time set. I would not want in any way to preclude the Senator from using as much time as he needs.

It sounded to me as if you have about 15 minutes on the other side. You could take the time you need, and when that is completed—I see Senator BYRD may be here and want to speak, too. So as long as Senators are here and wanting to speak, we will continue this afternoon. But if I could—

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

Mr. LOTT. I will be glad to yield to Senator REID.

Mr. REID. I say, through the leader, Senator BYRD is on the floor and he needs 20 minutes, just so the Senator from Alaska would have some idea. And I would think Senator BYRD would speak before Senator DURBIN.

Mr. DURBIN. That is a good idea.

Mr. REID. Although the Senator from Arkansas has agreed to how much time? Five minutes.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the exception of the Senator from Arkansas—I believe she wanted 5 minutes—Senator DURBIN for 15 minutes, Senator BYRD for 20 minutes, and then the Senator from Alaska be recognized after that to discuss the nuclear waste legislation.

Mr. REID. I say to the leader, then after the Senator from Alaska speaks,

the two Senators from Nevada may have a couple words to say.

Mr. LOTT. Under this request, they would have 10 minutes. If they need additional time, I don't think anybody is going to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BRYAN. Will the majority leader yield for a question?

Mr. LOTT. I am glad to yield.

Mr. BRYAN. May the Senator from Nevada inquire as to the majority leader's intent? In light of the objection, does the majority leader intend to file a motion to proceed?

Mr. LOTT. Not at this time, although it is my intent, before we go out, to take whatever action is necessary to try to get on to the substance of this bill. But in view of the other things that are pending, Labor-HHS Appropriations conference report, the trade bill, and, hopefully, bankruptcy, I am not going to file that today.

Mr. BRYAN. I thank the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, only to make this point, in the sequence here, if I could amend the unanimous-consent request so the Senator from Arkansas could go first, followed by the Senator from West Virginia. I am happy to be third in the sequence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE SENATE

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise on behalf of the people of Arkansas to express my extreme disappointment, frustration, and bewilderment with our ineffectiveness in the manipulation of the Senate. Today, I was supposed to be touring the former Eaker Air Force Base site in Blytheville, AR, with numerous officials from the National Park Service as well as other State and local leaders. This is a meeting we have worked on for months to arrange, understanding there might be legislative business today.

The community is united in its effort to have this former military base converted into a Mississippi Valley archaeological facility and research center. The benefits this project will bring to northeastern Arkansas are enormous, and I had hoped to be there today to again demonstrate my support to the entire community and the Park Service and to urge a favorable decision by the Park Service.

I also had several other appointments scheduled with various constituents in the State, but I had to cancel all these meetings to be here for scheduled votes. I thought we might vote on key trade initiatives and might even get to an appropriations bill. But these votes

are, once again, delayed and may never occur. This is not the first time I have had to cancel meetings or events on critical issues with large groups of constituents in Arkansas to stay in Washington for votes, votes and work that never happened or were simply procedural or partisan. My constituents understand when I have to be in Washington to vote, but what they do not understand and what frustrates me is when I stay in Washington for votes and work that never occur.

I would understand, and would encourage a great deal, if we were delaying debate so Members could travel to Rhode Island to pay tribute to our distinguished former colleague, John Chafee, a man whose presence in the Senate made this entire body a more respectful and enjoyable place, a truly bipartisan, wonderful colleague I enjoyed working with so very much and a great leader, one who I think would be proud to see us working to come to conclusion and bring about results on behalf of the American people. But this is not the case. There is no reason we should not be working and voting today.

October 29, today, was our target adjournment day. We could be and should be done. We have just voted our third continuing resolution. We could have been working in the Senate to come to conclusion. Five spending bills still remain, including funding for education and health care, which I think should have been our very first priority in the Senate. It is clear to everyone involved why this mess keeps happening, why we are not getting anywhere. The majority is trying to override the true design of the Senate. They are limiting debate. They are refusing amendments and pulling legislation off the floor to mute the voices of the minority. I have great concern with that.

I was elected to this body in November of 1998. I came to serve in 1999, during a historical situation that caused each of us to research and understand what the constitutional responsibilities of this body are about, to understand the design of this body. I was a Member of the House of Representatives. The Senate is called the upper Chamber, the deliberative body, for a very good reason. We are supposed to be above all of this. We are not the House. We should not operate as the House. We should be operating as a deliberative body, debating the issues, bringing out the concerns of each individual in this body, especially since just last night the House voted to gut Social Security by \$17 billion. What an important issue to the people of America.

We have a lot of difficult decisions before us, decisions we should be debating, we should be making, and not postponing. I call on the leadership and on my colleagues in the Senate, again, let us roll up our sleeves and get down to work. The American people deserve no less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

(The remarks of Mr. BYRD and Mr. DASCHLE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1833 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, earlier we were discussing the District of Columbia appropriations bill. It is a bill that I have taken an interest in as the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee. One of the smaller spending bills, it has now become one of the largest. You might wonder what has happened.

It turns out that the District of Columbia appropriations bill has become a vehicle in the closing hours of this session for a lot of legislative attempts at spending. In fact, the largest non-defense budget to be considered by the Congress each year is for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies. It is the largest bill. It passed the Senate in one form a few weeks ago. But the bill in its original form never has passed the House of Representatives. In fact, they went the entire session debating about whether or not there would be enough money to fund critical programs for education and health. The House could not muster a majority to pass that bill during its regular session. It had to wait for a conference committee which involved the District of Columbia to finally bring it to the floor just a few hours ago where it passed with a very close vote. It now is headed to the President's desk for his consideration after we vote on Tuesday. It is my guess that the rollcall will be by and large a partisan rollcall, but that the bill will pass the Senate and head down to the White House.

It is also fairly certain that bill will be vetoed by the President. In fact, the D.C. appropriations bill, as I mentioned earlier, has bought a ticket on the Titanic. This bill is going to sink, as it should, and let me tell you why it should.

I can't understand why we wait until the closing days of the session to address the issue of education. It is the last priority in Federal spending from the congressional perspective. It is the first priority of every American family. We just don't get it. We don't connect with people who time and time again, when asked in opinion polls for the major concern we face as a nation, identify education.

Yet in this congressional session it is an afterthought. We have done everything else; now let's look at education. I don't think the American people expect that kind of conduct from Congress. They don't expect Members in the closing hours of any session to finally get around to talking about schools, kids, and education. That is exactly what we have done.

This bill, which the President should veto and send back to Congress to work on more, guts the class size reduction initiative, an initiative which allows hiring more than 100,000 teachers nationwide so that first and second grade classrooms have fewer kids. Every teacher and parent knows the wisdom of that decision. Yet the Republican majority resists. They voted for it last year; now they don't want it.

They ought to come to Wheaton, IL, and the schools I visited there. This is considered to be a fairly conservative area politically. They are for the President's initiative. They have seen it work. Why this bill wants to kill that initiative, I don't know. They are not listening to teachers or parents when the Republican majority insists on that. The Republican bill funds 3,400 fewer afterschool centers. Almost a million kids in America are denied afterschool programs, a million who would have received it if the President's request had gone through. The kids will be out of school at 3 in the afternoon with little or no adult supervision and nothing constructive to do. The Republican majority says that's fine; that is the way it has to be. I don't think so. I think our vision of America should be broader. We know kids going home to an empty house or hanging around a mall or street corner are not engaging themselves in learning. I think the President's proposal was far better.

There are many other areas of concern, including denying title I reading and math teachers. Think about that. At a time when we need more scientists and computer engineers, we are going to eliminate 5,400 title I teachers who would have been included in the President's budget to teach reading and mathematics. Cut reading instruction for 100,000 kids, and they fall behind in their classes.

Is this the kind of bill we want to kick off the new century? Does this define our priority in education? I think not. I think it is a bad political decision. I hope the President wastes no time in vetoing it and sending it back to the Republican majority to address.

The worst part of the bill, if that isn't bad enough, has to do with medical research. Every administration tries in some way, shape, or form to find something to do legally with the budget which will allow them to get away from some tough decisions. Democrats have done it; the Republicans have done it. What we have done with the National Institutes of Health is tragic. The National Institutes of Health—and I am sure most Americans are familiar with that name—is the agency we assign the responsibility of finding cures for the diseases that plague Americans and people across the world.

When one of my former colleagues in the House of Representatives, Bill Natcher of Kentucky, who passed away several years ago, used to bring this bill to the floor, he would say: This is

the people's bill, the one that everyone can identify with because we are all interested in schools, education, and safety in the workplace.

The people's bill isn't being treated very well when it comes to medical research. I had a chance to look at comments made in the House of Representatives during this debate by my friend and former colleague, Congresswoman NANCY PELOSI of San Francisco, CA. I think she hit the nail on the head when she said our former Speaker, Tip O'Neill, said all politics is local. But in this bill all politics is personal. It is as personal as the woman with breast cancer, the man with prostate cancer, or people with AIDS who look to us for hope.

As a Senator, one of the more emotional things I have to go through each year is a visit from different groups interested in the National Institutes of Health funding. They come to me in desperation. They are the mothers and fathers of children with juvenile diabetes; they are the mothers and fathers of autistic children; they are people who are suffering from cancer and heart disease and rare diseases with names that one might never have heard. They say: Senator, do something; make sure the National Institutes of Health have the money they need to look into medical research to save our children's lives and to give them some hope.

That is a tough responsibility for anyone to face. Doctors face it every day, but politicians and Senators face it rarely. When we do, it is not a comfortable situation. I always assure them I will do everything I can, I will pass every bill I can to put money in medical research.

For the last several years, we have increased the amount of medical research. That is good. My colleague in the House, JOHN PORTER, a Republican from Illinois, has been a leader in that. I salute him for that. I think we should continue on that track. This bill, unfortunately, takes a giant step backwards because this bill, as it is drafted and being sent to the President, says the National Institutes of Health must postpone the awarding of medical research grants until the closing weeks of next year. It means that universities and medical researchers all across America are put on hold. They won't be given the money to research diabetes, cancer, heart disease, AIDS and all the other things we are concerned about. They have to wait.

What do their official organizations say about that? The American Council on Education says of this approach in the Republican bill to delay medical research in America:

... research programs cannot be stopped and started up again without considerable, often irretrievable loss to research progress.

The Association of American Medical Colleges says of this Republican idea:

The cumulative impact of these effects will slow the overall pace of research.

The Coalition for Health Funding says: